

Varying Views Offered on Future Status of Arsenal

Views of the military, and of spokesmen for Will county civilian groups are expressed in the following statements regarding ultimate disposition of the Joliet Arsenal.

Statement by Col. Byron Rife, commanding officer of the arsenal:

"Throughout the war years, ammunition from Elwood Ordnance plant and Kankakee Ordnance works helped the Allies push ahead to victory at a rapid pace. Scores of persons from this area helped produce the articles of war in record time as production schedules were met and exceeded.

"But as proud as we are at the Joliet Arsenal are of our past records, we do not look forward to attempting to exceed them at any future time. We would rather sit back with some of the rest of the people in this country and welcome peace. However, this isn't exactly possible, for America must never be caught with its arms down again as it was in December, 1941, when a sneak punch was delivered at Pearl Harbor. To avert

such attack, we must be ever alert. That is why our job in the army is not one of sitting back and taking peace as something for granted.

"WAR HAS always been a trait of mankind from primitive times down to the present day. If there isn't actually a shooting war, there are the social and economic wars which lead up to the ignition of the dangerous powder kegs of physical warfare.

"We are all hopeful that permanent peace will be brought about by the United Nations Organization. But that body will need the armed might of powerful nations, including America, to back it up in case one of the world families does something for which it should be soundly spanked.

"One of the arsenals of democracy and world peace is situated here in Will county. It is supported by taxpayers from throughout the country. Equipment and ammunition are being received here daily for storage in event of its need at some later date.

"THE JOLIET arsenal is actually one of the police departments of the world. The taxpayers in the city of Joliet and other communities in Will county are more than willing to pay for a good police force to protect the residents against burglaries, kidnapings, robberies and other crimes. They are willing to provide the weekly salaries for the police personnel and do not want a make-shift vigilante force to be called out after the damage has been done.

"If the taxpayers would look at paying taxes to support such places as the Joliet arsenal in the same light as they do their local police force there would be fewer complaints against the army's program of preparedness.

Statement by H. J. Schroeder, president of the Will County Farm Bureau:

"AN INTELLIGENT answer

to the continuance or discontinuance of the Joliet arsenal cannot be formulated without careful consideration as to all facts and conditions pertaining to it."

"Such a statement would involve the studying of needs for increased food production, cost and availability of improvements for returning the land to satisfactory agricultural production purposes,

the need for a part or the entire area for arsenal purposes which must be determined by the congress of the United States and the possibility of developing a plan whereby this area would make its contribution toward its proportionate share of the main-

tenance of county government in some other form than by the payment of taxes."

Statement by Richard W. Jones, executive secretary of the Will County Manufacturers' association:

"In consideration of any disposition of the property and facilities now occupied by the Joliet arsenal, it would seem to me that definite preference should be given to the views of the war department. The war department, after all, is in the best position to know whether or not it is necessary to maintain the property as an arsenal.

"LARGE SUMS of the taxpayers' money were invested in pur-

chasing the land and in equipping and erecting the buildings. It is my understanding that these buildings are of permanent nature. Whether or not the present equipment can be utilized for producing any other products than those made during the war, I do not know.

"For safety purposes, the buildings on the arsenal property were erected at great distances from one another. In the manufacture of peace-time products, however, this one factor of distance alone, might make operation too costly for any single manufacturer.

"It has been suggested that

smaller manufacturing concerns might acquire individual buildings for manufacturing purposes. This might not be practical as there are a number of manufacturing sites available in and around Joliet, altho it is true that in most instances buildings would have to be erected.

"Then, too, the ultimate dis-

posal of the heavy warehouse property may have a direct bearing on the local industrial picture. That property could be disposed of thru individual sale of the many separate buildings which are now there, and which are probably more suitable to light manufacturing than the arsenal property."